



HOPE CHURCH NEWS

"...A living hope..." | Peter 1:3

Volume 60, No. 1

January 2017

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Inserts:

- *January Calendar*
- *Lectionary*
- *Restorative Circles Facilitator List*

The deadline for the February newsletter is **Wednesday, January 18.**

Office Hours
Monday - Thursday:
9:00am - 5:00pm
Friday: Closed

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77 West 11th Street
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HopeChurchRCA.org



Foundations of Community

Season of Reconciliation 2017 January 15 - February 5

More information on page 2.

Congregational Meeting: January 22

Our annual congregational meeting will take place on Sunday, January 22, from 12:15-2:00 p.m. in the Commons. We will begin with a shared meal and conversation around tables. The Consistory will provide a soup lunch.

- If your last name begins with A – O, please bring a salad.

- If your last name begins with P – Z, please bring bread to share.

Transportation will be provided for residents of the Warm Friend, Freedom Village, and Appledorn at 2:00 p.m. (as well as the usual bus run at 12:15 p.m.). Please plan to attend!

Season of Reconciliation 2017

January 15 - February 5

Adult Education
Sundays, 9:40-10:40 am

There will be no Adult Education on January 1.

January 8 - Update on the Holland Refugee Program
Update on Holland Refugee Program – both what is happening more broadly in our community and Hope Church’s involvement.

January 15 - Holland’s Youth Programs
Holland’s Youth Programs including ESCAPE ministries and Hope College’s CASA.

January 22 - Andrea Mehall, Holland Equity Alliance
Andrea Mehall from Holland Equity Alliance will present on work being done surrounding racial justice in Holland, primarily in Holland Public Schools.

January 29 - Joel Westmaas, Taking Root Ministries
Taking Root Ministries will present on their training and transformation ministry using residential construction as a vehicle for both new skills and new lives.

February 5 - Summary
A summary of the previous weeks and a time of reflection on the season of reconciliation.

Book Study

Thursdays, 5:45 - 7:30 pm -light supper provided
January 19, 26, and February 2

Life is the path that we walk. For most, that path is heavily influenced by where it begins. The Reconciliation Ministry invites all readers to explore two distinct origins to see where they converge and where they split. This year there will be two books discussed over the course of three weeks; a tall order, but there will be food! The two books are: “Between the World and Me” by Ta-Nehisi Coates & “Hillbilly Elegy” by J.D. Vance. Copies of the books are available along with a sign up in the gathering area.

Worship

Early Worship 8:30 am, Liturgical Worship 11 am

Witness to Reconciliation

Each Sunday at the 11 am service throughout the Season of Reconciliation, a member of our congregation is asked to speak to the notion of personal reconciliation in their own lives. They will share their stories of reconciliation, passion, and sacrifice in order that we may all humanize the stories of others and gain better insight into the body of Christ that we share with one another. These stories have proven over the course of the years to be some of the most memorable and powerful aspects of the season.

Restorative Circles Facilitator Training

Thursday, February 2, 9am- 4pm; Friday, February 3, 9am- 4pm

Training for Restorative Circles has been a part of the Season of Reconciliation for the past 5 years. The mission of restorative circles melds easily with the message of reconciliation that is central to the season. Training Dates will be February 2nd and 3rd, 2017. Further information will be posted in the bulletin. Any questions can be directed to Jill Russell or Ann McKnight.
More information on page 8.

Martin Luther King, Jr Day of Service: January 16

Maple Avenue Ministries is once again hosting a day of service to honor the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. and it is open to the community. This year’s recipients of the day of service will be senior citizens living in Flint, MI. While there is so much more to do, there has been attention and support being offered to children, schools, and families. The seniors of Flint have not been as visible. On Monday, January 16th, community members will gather at Maple Avenue Ministries, 427 Maple Ave., from 9:00am – 12:00pm to assemble care kits to be delivered to the The Church Without Walls in Flint who will get these into the hands seniors around the community. Hope Church is being asked to supply the lotion for these kits. **Please bring your donation of Nivea, Curel, or Eucerin lotion to Hope Church by Sunday, January 15.** The brand of the lotion matters in order to combat skin diseases caused by the water contamination.

In the afternoon, **children are invited** to a civil rights activity time from 1pm-3pm. They will play games like Civil Rights Bingo and they will have the opportunity to work with author, Antionette Lawrence, who will be present for the afternoon. She will share some of her stories and then teach the children how to tell and write their own stories. This is a great hands-on opportunity for children to engage in this important day of service in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Banner in the Gathering Area

Reconciliation Ministry



Have you noticed the new banner in the gathering area? The Reconciliation Ministry requested that this banner be hung as Advent turned to Christmastide and throughout the Season of Reconciliation. They saw in this a clear linkage between the biblical story that forms us as followers of Jesus and the very contentious conversation happening in our civic life regarding the place of immigrants and refugees in our communities. The request went to consistory and it stimulated a lively conversation. Should the banner be hung at all? Should it be hung above the church steps as a message to our community about the welcome immigrants and refugees could expect from our congregation? Or should it be hung in our gathering area to stimulate conversation and awareness within our congregation?

Consistory members had very different perspectives on this:

- A sign like this is an important signal to some of the most vulnerable in our community that we stand with them and celebrate their presence among us
- A sign like this is political and divisive at a time that is already divisive enough
- A sign like this is a clear witness to the good news of the gospel
- A sign like this is self-righteous and self-congratulatory

Ultimately the consistory decided to hang the banner in the gathering area with the hope of stimulating the same kind of rich exchange and dialogue that occurred within the consistory itself. You may not know this but the consistory has a policy to guide decisions like these. One of the lines of the Statement on Social Activism says: "When such situations arise (to address injustice and care for God's world), Consistory will acknowledge the diversity among us and weigh carefully the impulse to speak, our desire for unity, and the effectiveness and impact of a statement (or action)." We would love to hear your thoughts on this banner. You can send your comments to the church office for the Reconciliation Ministry to review.

The Reconciliation Ministry also invites you to an evening of education and conversation on the topic of Immigration. Hope Church, Grace Episcopal Church, and First Presbyterian Church are sponsoring an evening program on **January 11 at 6:30-8:30 pm** here at Hope Church entitled "**Seeking a Christian Perspective on Immigrants in our Community.**" It is a two-hour presentation that invites questions and participation from the audience. Speaker will be Sarah Yore-VanOosterhout from Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates. Watch the bulletin for more details.

Congregational Care

Sharon Arendshorst and Steve Griffore, Congregational Care Ministry co-chairs

The Congregational Care Ministry (CCM) has undergone some changes! Prayerful discussions at many levels have led to the discontinuation of the Hope Church Care Group system. Care Groups were a wonderful form of connection and care for many years. The new CCM structure invites all members of the congregation to participate in this ministry of care.

The CCM design affirms that the *whole* congregation is one big circle of loving care and support. As a part of the circle of care, this new model invites you to participate in whatever ways you are each uniquely gifted to offer support and encouragement: a phone call, a note of comfort, an offer of help, a visit... You may also participate in several intentional ways. First, you may contact the office (office@hopechurchca.org) and ask to receive

the volunteer blog. You can also sign up online at lifeofhopechurch.wordpress.com by entering your email address under "Follow Blog Via Email" and clicking "Follow". The volunteer blog goes out from the office with special requests that need to be filled (meals, transportation, reading, home repair...). If a request fits your skills and schedule you may then volunteer to help fulfill that particular need.

Second, you may ask to have your name added to the prayer link. Whenever someone authorizes the office to share a prayer concern, you will receive an email and the privilege of praying for that person or concern. In addition, we encourage you to call the office (616-392-7947) whenever you have a concern or joy to share, so that our circle of care might enfold you as well!

Congregational Care Ministry members operate within this circle of care offered by the whole congregation. In the new design, CCM members will continue to offer support according to the CCM members' interests and gifts. Several members will work with the office to facilitate meals and transportation and help respond to other requests. Along with the pastoral staff, CCM members will continue to visit and build relationships with those among our congregation who are no longer able to attend church.

Through this new design, the Congregational Care Ministry members look forward to serving with you in our love and care for one another.

Save the Date: April 29 ~ Living Hope Renovations Dedication

Lois Maassen, Project Team Leader

You are invited to the Living Hope Renovations Dedication and Open House on **Saturday, April 29 from 2 - 4:30 pm.**

A dedication service will take place at 2 PM, and the open house will be from 2:30-4:30 pm. Mark your calendars!

Living Hope Renovations Pun of the Month

Pastor Gordon: Why did we fix up the 11th Street entrance?
Pastor Jill: Because we adoor Hope Church.

~submitted by Earl Laman



Work is continuing! The new 11th street doors are now in place.

Organ News - Tulip Time Concert & a Post-Pizza-Pre-Concert-Tour-Recital

Rhonda Edgington, Organist

In March, I will be out of town for about two weeks. First, I'll be playing an organ concert at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. I'm excited about this, because while the organ is rather new, it was built using models and techniques heavily researched, that were used by 17th century European organ builders, and is perfect for the kinds of music I love to play. Read more at baroqueorgan.cornell.edu. I'll also be able to combine this trip with a visit to Paige Convis and her husband, in nearby Schodak Landing, NY. Then I'll be flying to Germany, where I haven't been since the summer of 2014, to play two organ concerts, in the cathedral in Magdeburg, and in the Marktkirche (Market Church) in Hanover. I'm also looking forward to seeing some old friends, since Hanover is not far from Bremen.

And before I set out on this adventure,

I wanted to share with my Hope Church friends some of the music I've been preparing for these concerts, but which I can't quite find spots to play in a normal worship service. Thus, a new idea - the Post-Pizza-Pre-Concert-Tour-Recital! On **February 26** there will be a pizza Sunday. After we've all had our pizza and a bit of time to chat with friends, I invite you to join me back in the sanctuary for a short (approx 30 mins) recital of music I'll be playing in my concerts in NY and Germany. There will be a range of music, from Baroque to Modern. The concert will start about 1pm (but no pizza allowed in the sanctuary please!)

During Tulip Time this year, for the first time, there will be an organ concert at Hope Church as part of the official Tulip Time activities. I'll be playing Dutch organ music on Sunday, May 7 at 7pm. The Tulip Time committee

was very excited to hear my proposal of a concert focused solely on Dutch music, since, despite the many musical offerings at Tulip Time, no one plays Dutch music! So I'm putting together a program that starts with Sweelinck, a famous Baroque organist and composer, continues through the romantic period, and culminates with the music of Ad Wammes, a living Dutch composer who writes in a jazzy and accessible style. You can read more at <https://www.tuliptime.com/events/organ-concert/>.

This is a ticketed event, and you are welcome and encouraged to buy your tickets through Tulip Time for \$15, but I am also needing folks to help out that evening, as ushers, ticket takers, and sellers of CD's and books. So, if you'd like free admittance to the concert, talk to me about getting on this list of helpers.

Kids Hope

Vicki Rumpsa, Kids Hope USA Co-Director



Kids Hope ended the 2016 year with our first ever Fun Activity Day at Third Reformed Church. This event was planned to enhance the relationship between mentors and their child in a more relaxed and fun atmosphere. Building relationships is one of the main goals that Kids Hope takes seriously as we find that building this base of familiarity leads to better communication, more academic

success and an overall strengthening of the mentors and child trust.

If laughter and happy chatter could tell the success of an event this one was a winner! Mentors and sub mentors went hand in hand throughout the many activity stations set out for them. Everyone used their creativity in decorating a frame for a picture of themselves and making Christmas Cards. Another station they participated in was the always fun Pictionary game where both mentors and child got a chance to draw and guess. Other stations included the popular GaGa ball game, Matchbox car racing and a challenging maze building activity. Just ask any of our mentors and they will tell you a story from that day and how their mentor and child relationship grew by spending this social time together.

Speaking of mentors, Hope Church has 17 of them and since this is Mentor Appreciation Month I thought this would be a good time to recognize them in this newsletter. Our Kids Hope mentors are: Rhonda Edgington, Steve Berry, Linda Cook, Sandy Mulder, Connie VanderVelde, Andrew Bredow, Brad Bright, Tim Pennings, Peggy DeHaan, Barb Knoops, John Beyer, Stephanie Beyer, Dave Boelkins, Bob Luidens, Norma Killilea, Barb Blauw, and Terry Pott. If you see one of them give them a BIG thanks for taking time in their busy schedules to mentor.

We will be honoring these volunteers as well as our sub mentors and prayer partners at an Appreciation Dinner at the end of January. Praise the Lord for the difference each of these volunteers is making in the life of a Kids Hope child.

Adult Education: Presenting Classes about a Variety of Faith-Related Topics

Judy Parr, Adult Education Task Force chair

The year 2017 marks the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, dating its genesis from the year 1517 when Martin Luther published his 95 theses, a major impetus to the Protestant Reformation. To help us understand this crucial era in the history of Christianity, Suzanne McDonald, Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology at Western Theological Seminary, will present classes on February 12, 19, and 26. In the first class she will focus on some Renaissance paintings and a woman's will from 1508 to describe what it was like to be an ordinary Roman Catholic on the eve of the Reformation. The second and third classes will consider some of the key aspects of the Protestant Reformation from its beginning to its diverse influences into the twenty-first century.

From March 5 through 26 Hope Church's Health Ministry and the Disabilities Task Force will present classes on Building a Sense of Wholeness and Belonging in the Church and Community. Classes presented by Hope Church members and guest speakers will begin with

"How Are We Doing?" which will include stories from persons regarding their experiences of wholeness and belonging within Hope Church. The second session will examine a model, Universal Design, which identifies ways in which the church can be programatically and architecturally inclusive. The third and fourth classes will be about "Wholeness and Belonging within the Church" and "Wholeness and Belonging within the Community."

Plans for post-Easter classes are still in process, but they are likely to include a Bible study and a General Synod Preview. A General Synod Review panel discussion will again take place on a summer Sunday. In the fall we are looking forward to a likely series of classes taught by Hope College religion professor Steven Bouma-Prediger, co-author of *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement*.

Classes meet in Commons I between 9:40 and 10:45 each Sunday morning during the school year. They are free and open to all adults.

Several years ago, those planning Adult Education adopted the following mission statement:

The Adult Education group plans and coordinates educational opportunities for adults using as much as possible the talents and resources of the congregation. Such opportunities are intended for spiritual formation through biblical study and critical examination of cultural, social, and moral issues from a Christian perspective.

Adult education also happens in Hope church worship services, book discussion groups, men's breakfasts, women's circles, and Caring for Creation activities. Operating under the supervision of the Christian Education Ministry, Adult Education planning members are Jim Brownson, David Myers, Milt Nieuwsma, Judy Parr (chairperson) Jane Schuyler, Eloise Van Heest, and Gordon Wiersma. If you have an idea for a course you want presented or would like to join the planning group, contact one of these people.

The next Ministry Highlight will feature the Sacristy Guild.

Congratulations Judy Vander Wilt!

Recently, Hope Church member Judy Vander Wilt was honored by the Lakeshore Disability Network along with 10 other outstanding disability advocates in Ottawa and Allegan counties during the Ability Award reception at Baker Lofts, in Holland.

To learn about the many ways Judy has engaged in leadership, advocacy, and empowerment of people with

disabilities throughout her life, please read the article below.

Judy Vander Wilt is a wife, mother, grandmother, educator, leader, organizer and committed woman who has devoted her life to empowering, encouraging, supporting and advocating for people with disabilities.

As a young mother, Judy parented a

child with learning challenges prior to PL94.142 and became an advocate for services for him – which in turn drove her passion to fight for all children.

When Judy taught in pre-school programs, she became sensitized to the special needs of some young children. This led her to return to the university to become certified to work with children with special

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needs, earning a Masters Degree in Special Education. This resulted in being certified for working with young children (birth to age 6) and with children (grades K-12) who needed social-emotional support. Later, she added certification for working with children with learning disabilities.

She began the PPI (Pre-Primary Impaired) program for Zeeland Public Schools, working there for 5 years. This program served children ages 3-6.

When she moved to Orange City, IA, she chaired a community committee which began a Friendship Program for persons with special needs. This program continues to thrive.

In 1984, her teaching shifted to the college level, where she taught pre-service teachers for over 20 years in

both undergraduate and graduate programs. During these years she completed a Doctor of Education with a focus on educational psychology, which strengthened her interest in how people learn.

Her teaching included certificate-track courses for special education teachers. Her primary interests were speech and language development as well as behavioral issues.

In her retirement years, she joined the Friendship Ministries Board, an international program which shares the Christian gospel with persons with cognitive disabilities. In this role she was vice-president for one year and president for two years.

Additionally, she serves as the Disability Advocate on behalf of the

Reformed Church in America for the Holland Classis, where she assists churches as they embrace persons with special needs, encouraging a sense of belonging and service for and with all persons.

Finally, she chairs the Disability Task Force at Hope Church where she, along with others, seeks to make the church a welcoming place for all, regardless of ability, and a place where all persons' gifts are received with gratitude. Most recently, she has been a strong advocate for helping insure that all spaces are accessible to all.

Judy has directly or indirectly impacted thousands of persons with disabilities, and her work in this field continues.

Children's Ministry

Jocelyn Van Heest, Children's Ministry Director

Nursery News - An Invitation

We give a huge thank you to Margaret Buckley as she has staffed the nursery for most of this fall during the transition to the wonderful new nursery. The youth interns have been a wonderful help and add so much to the experience for the young children. We are asking for adults, including parents of the children to sign up to cover a couple of the Sundays a month. Adults of all ages can share their gifts with these young ones. Sign up with a friend if you would feel more comfortable. There are always youth to help with the lifting and chasing. The children love readers, laps to sit in and someone to give them special attention. Please contact Margaret Buckley or Jocelyn Van Heest if you have any questions of how you could be of service or to sign up for a Sunday morning for the worship hour. The signup sheet is in the nursery. Thanks for considering being a part of this nurturing ministry. What a great way

to get to know and enjoy the youth of Hope Church and the young children and their parents.

January 8 - It's an EPIPHANY Celebration

The church school class will share a time of preparation and celebration on this Epiphany Sunday. The children will hear stories, decorate the Epiphany cakes, and learn more about the importance of this special day.

During the 11AM worship service, the children will help with the collection of the white gifts in the sanctuary and then will meet together during Children in Worship to continue the celebration. The children will be in the Commons and their story responses will be on display. We invite the congregation to join them after the service to share some epiphany cake and see the children's responses.

An Opportunity to Share Your Needlework Talent

For many years Kay MacKenzie has shared her skill at needlework by creating the cross stitch banners that are given to each of the children baptized at Hope Church. She has prepared and provided the material kits for some others to help with the cross stitching and then she has finished the banner by stitching in the name, sewing on the backing, and creating a beautiful hem stitched edge. She is ready and very willing to teach others to continue with this very meaningful work. The banners may be cross stitched in advance but the finishing needs to be done after the child's name is known. There is usually at least a month advance notice. If you have an interest in sharing your gifts please contact the office or Jocelyn Van Heest. Hope Church has been blessed with Kay's dedication to the importance of baptism and to the children of the church.

Events and Announcements

The church office will be closed on **Monday, Jan. 2 for the New Year's Day holiday.**

White Gift Offering Epiphany Sunday, Jan. 8

On Epiphany Sunday, Jan. 8, bring a personal care product for a child or woman, wrapped in white tissue paper. These gifts will be brought forward during the Word with the Children, and later given to the Center for Women in Transition, a local agency assisting women and families caught in abusive relationships and empowering a hopeful future for them.

Women's Circle Meetings

Circle 1 will meet in Commons II on Weds. Jan. 4, at 9:30 am.

Circle 2 will not meet in January.

Circle 4 will meet on Wednesday, January 11 at 7:00 pm. Eloise Van Heest will host the meeting and Kathy Sheridan will lead the lesson.

Coffee Time at Resthaven-40th St.

This is a caring outreach and fellowship opportunity for residents and their friends at different locations to meet with the pastors and other congregation members and staff. The next Coffee Time will be at Resthaven-40th St. on Tuesday, January 10, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. Mark your calendar, and come for an hour, all are welcome!

Hope Church Readers

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 18th, at 1:00pm in Commons II. We will be discussing the book Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker by Jennifer Chiaverini. Our leader will be Marilyn Cook, and the hostesses will be: Deborah Schakel and Audrienne Hill. Consider beginning the New Year by joining us....we LOVE new members!

Pizza Sunday

The next Pizza Sunday is scheduled for January 29.

Red Cord Community: Save the Date

An ecumenical non-profit organization, Red Cord Community cultivates the conscious integration of Christian spirituality and activism through the practices of Contemplation, Compassion, Creativity and Community. Save the date: January 27-29: 2-night Contemplative Retreat, GilChrist Retreat Center, Three Rivers, MI.

Restorative Circle Facilitator Training: February 2 and 3, 9am-4pm

This two day training is for anyone who is eager to support the creation of strong communities, families, work environments and congregations. You will learn how to communicate and collaborate during times of conflict or even just around different points of view. You will develop skills that can be put to practice immediately in informal ways and will also learn how to facilitate a formal restorative circle as well. For more information and to register go to <https://hrcircles.wordpress.com/> or call the church office at 616-392-7947.

Turkey Donations

Be Thankful! Be Happy! Our effort to provide turkeys turned out bountifully! - our \$2,688 in gifts placed between 240-269 turkeys on the Thanksgiving tables of our community's neediest families! An additional THANK YOU to those who contributed other items to the Thanksgiving boxes.

2017 Offering Envelopes

Envelopes for 2017 offerings are now available for pick-up in the Gathering Area. They are displayed alphabetically. If you are unable to be in worship and need your envelopes mailed, please call the office. Special envelopes for the initial offering and for contributions to the Deacons Fund are enclosed, as well as envelopes for special holiday offerings. You are encouraged to use your envelopes as this saves time when the offering is counted.

The 2017 Telephone Directory will be available beginning in early January. You can pick up a copy in the gathering area or in the Hope Church office.

Flowers for Worship



We are blessed to be able to express the beauty of God's creation in our worship services. If you would like to be a part of the flower ministry,

please sign up on the flower calendar on the music room windows, or call Joyce Teusink. Celebrate a special occasion in your family, or give flowers in honor or memory of a loved one. A short note will be included in the bulletin for your celebration or memorial. We have florists who assist us for a fee, or you can deliver your own arrangement. Call Joyce Teusink with questions or for more details. Thank you for making our worship service even more vibrant!

Thank You

My family was adopted by your church for Christmas. We all wanted to personally thank you from the bottom of our hearts, Happy Holidays!

*Love,
The Johnson Family*

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

17 Vern Boersma

28 Dorothy Robinson

We missed listing Betty Arendshorst's birthday last month, December 20, 2016.

If you are 75+ years old and would like to be listed in the birthday column, please contact the church office at (616) 392-7947 or office@hopechurchca.org

Caring for Creation Corner

Joe Arevalo, Caring for Creation Coordinator

Uh oh, the tv remote isn't working, time to change the batteries. You get new ones and put them in. What do you do with the old ones? Throw them away? Save them up in a bag or bucket for special handling?

For years, Hope Church has made this decision a lot easier by offering to collect used batteries to recycle them. Steve Griffore worked at Herman Miller where he could take the batteries for free to have them professionally recycled by Comprenew. When Steve retired earlier this year, the batteries could no longer go there. Thus we found ourselves confronted with a dilemma. Either we would pay for recycling through a certified organization like Comprenew, or we would give the batteries for free to a company whose practices we knew nothing about. Faced with a limited budget, the value of recycling batteries needed more research.

In 1996 single use household batteries stopped having mercury in

them, making it safe for them to be disposed in landfills. However, the batteries contain resources like zinc, manganese, plastic, and copper that could go back into the production of new products. Deconstructing batteries to salvage these materials is a very difficult process performed in few locations. From a creation care perspective, the question is how many resources are used and pollution created during the salvaging of resources from recycled batteries compared to during extraction of "new" resources.

In the 2011 study Life Cycle Impacts Of Alkaline Batteries With A Focus On End-Of-Life, researchers at MIT determined that the emissions associated with transporting batteries for recycling, can become a significant amount depending on the battery recycling infrastructure in proximity. For example, how close is a drop off location, is that location an extra trip in the car and, how far is that location from the salvaging facility.

Sometimes the amount of resources used to get batteries to recycling ends up offsetting the amount of resources saved by recycling.

After analysis, we determined Hope Church is well positioned for battery recycling. Congregants bring batteries are not making an extra trip. When the bucket is full, we take the bucket to a collection point which pools more batteries before taking them across the state to relatively close Brighton. Thus we determined to pursue continuation of battery recycling. Steve was able to work out an arrangement with Comprenew that allows us to give them our batteries for free, so the only cost involved is the transportation, which Steve generously donates to do. If you have any thoughts on this decision, please let me know. We hope to expand the opportunities at Hope Church to collect items for recycle or reuse. If you have any ideas, please send them my way!

Your Body: Fantabulous "...awesomely and wonderfully made..."

Are You Kidneying Me?

Earl Laman, Health Ministry member



YES! DEFINITELY! Because we humans are pathetically under-informed of their importance! They are not just little kidney beans that create pee!

These twins, located on either side of the spine at the lowest level of the rib cage, are each about the size of a small fist. They are insulted to be seen simply as strained little pumps flushing out pollution into a waste ditch!

When being interviewed, one said, "These bodies we inhabit would be all screwed up and sick 24/7 without us!" The other declared, "We're not sewer workers, we're health officers!"

That's because each kidney is made up of about a million units- like a million little guys sifting and sorting everything carried in the blood and putting it in different tubes. They work 24 hr. shifts, no breaks.

How much do they process? Up to 200 quarts of blood every 24 hours. And get this: they rip out all manner of rotten stuff, from toxins to drugs, and deposit them in 2 quarts of fluid which flow down into the bladder. Gone! Well, they reside there for 1 to 8 hours- if you can wait that long.

How about the other 198 quarts? Ah, that's the grand, significant and untold story! The twins filter all the blood cells and large molecules, mostly proteins, and sends all their minerals through the tubule (wouldn't that be an honorable name for a newborn?) back into the bloodstream- refreshed and loaded! That's work!

So, what? They become powerful chemical factories! 1- They produce an active form of vitamin for strong healthy bones- or they'd turn to mush! (Then try walking!) 2- They control the production of red blood cells: too many? too few? Big trouble!

Also, they measure and balance the "pH" in your blood! (Means "power of Hydrogen") Which means it measures the acidity and alkalinity- which could "stone" your system!

Also, they keep the level of electrolytes, such as sodium, potassium, phosphate, in stable condition. You want unstable? Then, please note, they release hormones that regulate our all-important blood pressure!

And they do all this so quietly (you hear no flushing sounds!), so steadily and constantly (they don't wake you up), and so magically (without even using a computer!).

But we cooperate with the Creator by steadily seeking to be healthy. One doctor wrote: "Healthy kidneys like healthy bodies."

And it would not be corny or sacrilegious to sing: "Praise God from whom all kidneys flow!"

and finally

From Pastor Gordon: I worked with Pastor Jill and Pastor Beth in writing this article and we are signing it together, as this message is one we all want to share with you.

In April of this year I wrote this in my *and finally* article, mindful of the upcoming election:

"To be a church is to be a very political place, but is not to be a partisan place. I reject any characterization of faith as non-political, since gospel issues of justice, compassion and peace have much to do with how political power is carried out. But I also reject the idea that faith is explicitly linked to or against a particular party or politician. It is both the challenge and the responsibility of a Christian community to engage the political realm passionately while not engaging in partisan divisions. This is not always easy, but it is always essential."

It is after the November 8 election now, and I believe those words more strongly than ever. Here's why.

I am writing this on December 11 having just attended a community forum sponsored by the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance with Hope Church as a supporting partner of the event. Many Hope Church members were there including Pastor Beth and Pastor Jill. This was a fairly quickly organized event, but about 250 people showed up on a frigid Tuesday evening, packing into Herrick Library to learn about and organize around community issues: the environment, religious tolerance, racial justice, LGBTQ issues, immigration and refugees, women's rights, school bullying and hate crimes. I do not want to be coy: it was clear that many of those present were concerned about the election, and the issues addressed were seen as areas put at risk by the political climate put forward by the election result. But what I experienced at the gathering was not a partisan spirit or mean-spiritedness, but rather a strong desire to be politically involved and engaged constructively in our community. And even more to the point, I heard from many a fervent desire for people of faith to be engaged in the political process.

- I heard a mom from Zeeland (born and raised there) who is a Muslim, and she pleaded for those who are Christians to use their citizenship and their congregations to influence the political process toward laws and policies that promote religious acceptance and freedom.
- I heard from non-white residents who asked white Christians to use their individual and congregational influence to steer the political landscape toward recognizing bias and implementing justice.
- I heard from people who experience the church as being unconcerned with the poor, uninterested in speaking against injustice, intolerant of other religions and unwilling to face racial prejudice; and I heard a deep desire for the church to prove them wrong.
- I heard from neighbors who are LGBTQ that there is a need for religious communities to advocate for laws that protect and promote their rights, since Christian influence is often used in the political realm instead as a means to marginalize LGBTQ people.
- I heard about residents who are immigrants, people in our workplaces and schools and neighborhoods, who want a chance to be considered with dignity and fairness, rather than demonized or devalued.
- I heard the need for religious communities to be involved in protecting and caring for God's creation.
- I heard stories of people threatened and harassed due to religious, ethnic and social bias, and the need for people of faith to shape laws and institutions that promote diversity within a thriving community.

All of these are matters of politics. All of these are matters of faith. It is part of our challenge as a community of faith in this political season to discern how to carry out our faith in ways that brings our values of justice, reconciliation and unity into the political realm, both individually and as a congregation.

I've promised to keep you updated on my Doctor of Ministry courses at McCormick Seminary in Chicago. Part of my current reading addresses the reality that Protestant, primarily white, primarily middle-class, congregations (that sounds a lot like Hope Church!) tend to shy away from political issues and emphasize a more private expression of faith. Why? Because they can, as many of the issues affect them less directly. I believe that Hope Church is called beyond simply our own interests toward a solidarity with those who are impacted more directly by the political, economic and social powers of our community. This solidarity takes us into turbulent political waters, but a faithful course is guided by this deep rudder: "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God." Our community is asking us to engage in the political issues we face, and by God's grace we look forward to Hope Church navigating a faithful course together.

~Pastor Gordon, Pastor Jill, & Pastor Beth

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Hope Church News

January 2017



Early Worship Music Coordinator

Hope Church is accepting applications for a part-time Early Worship Music Coordinator position. The Early Worship Music Coordinator will coordinate the Early Worship Music program as a vital ministry for the church's Christian mission. This person is skilled in the area of keyboard accompaniment and has experience in leading worship. It is the expectation that this person has experience in working well in a group situation, and along with the entire staff will work cooperatively to fulfill the mission of the church. For full job description, please visit the Hope Church website: hopechurchca.org/index.php/job-opportunity-early-worship-music-coordinator/. Please send cover letter and resume to marevalo@hopechurchca.org, Attn. Pastors Gordon Wiersma and Jill Russell, by January 15, 2017.

January 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:40 am Chancel Choir 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship, <i>Gordon Wiersma</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship	2 Office Closed 7 pm Community	3 5 pm Executive Committee 6:15 pm Stewardship & Finance	4 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 9:30 am Circle 1 6 pm Carillon Choir 7 pm Chancel Choir	5 1:30 pm FLEX 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym) 6:30 pm Health 7 pm Reconciliation	6	7
8 8:30 am Early Worship, <i>Audrienne Hill</i> 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am Chancel Choir 9:40 am Joint Youth Ed Hour 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship, <i>Beth Carroll</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship 12:15 pm Epiphany Celebration 6 pm Fish Club	9 11 am REST Support Group 7 pm Consistory with Board of Elders & Deacons	10 10 am Coffee Time at Resthaven -40th St. 7 pm Personnel	11 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 7:45 am Discerning our Future Task Force 12:10 pm Quiet Space 6 pm Carillon Choir 6:30 pm Immigration Conversation 7 pm Circle 4	12 1:30 pm FLEX 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	13	14
15 8:30 am Early Worship, <i>Jill Russell</i> 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am Chancel Choir 9:40 am Joint Youth Ed Hour 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship, <i>Jill Russell</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship 6 pm Fish Club and High Hopes with parents - training on dating & boundaries, led by CWIT	16 4 pm Outreach & Hospitality 5 pm Fellowship 7 pm Congregational Care	17	18 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 12 pm Building & Grounds 12:10 pm Quiet Space 1 pm Readers 6 pm Carillon Choir 7 pm Chancel Choir	19 1:30 pm FLEX 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 5:45 pm Season of Reconciliation Book Study 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	20 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> <i>Fish Club Winter Retreat Jan. 20-22</i> </div>	21
22 8:30 am Early Worship, <i>Linda McFadden</i> 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am Chancel Choir 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship, <i>Gordon Wiersma</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship 12:15 pm Annual Meeting	23 11 am REST Support Group 6:30 pm Christian Education 7 pm Worship, Prayer & Spirituality	24	25 6:15 am Men's Breakfast 12:10 pm Quiet Space 6 pm Carillon Choir 6 pm Youth Sunday Rehearsal	26 1:30 pm FLEX 2-4 pm Hope Church Nurse 5:45 pm Season of Reconciliation Book Study 7 pm Volleyball (FUMC Gym)	27 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> <i>High Hopes Winter Retreat Jan. 27-29</i> </div>	28
29 8:30 am Early Worship, <i>Kay Hubbard</i> 9:40 am Church School (children, adults) 9:40 am Chancel Choir 10:45 am Nursery 11 am Worship, <i>Jill Russell</i> 11:15 am Children in Worship 11:15 am 6th & 7th Grade 12:15 pm Pizza Sunday	30	31 5 pm Kids Hope Appreciation Dinner				